

# Democrats rally behind Chuck Schumer after vote to end shutdown on Republicans' terms

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*On Sunday, November 16, at 3:00 p.m. US Eastern Time, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) and the Socialist Equality Party (US) are holding an online public meeting to organize the fight against layoffs and hunger. **Register here to attend.***

On Tuesday, members of the House of Representatives began returning to Washington to vote on a spending package to end the longest government shutdown in US history. On Monday, eight Democratic Party-aligned senators joined 52 Republicans to advance legislation that would fund the entire government through January 30, 2026, and three sectors of the federal government through the end of September 2026.

The legislation would end the shutdown on terms dictated by President Donald Trump and Republican lawmakers, with no provisions, as had been demanded by the Democrats, to extend tax credits for Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) recipients, who face a doubling or tripling of premiums after January 1.

More than a cave-in, the Democrats' debacle is a deliberate act to shore up the crisis-ridden and vastly unpopular Trump regime. The Democrats are terrified by the mounting opposition to Trump and his dictatorial agenda, for fear that it will escape politically safe channels and threaten the capitalist system, which they defend no less than the Republicans.

The three funded sectors include the Department of Agriculture—under which SNAP benefits are distributed; Veterans Affairs and military construction; and the legislative branch. As with previous spending packages, the deal guarantees back pay for all federal workers, including those furloughed.

While neither the House nor the Senate was in session on Tuesday due to Veterans Day, the House is expected to take up the spending bill on Wednesday. Trump has already indicated he will sign the bill once it is passed.

The shutdown may end this week, but its effects will continue to be felt by millions. On Tuesday, the Supreme Court again put a hold on a lower court ruling that would have forced the Trump administration to reallocate money to fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), delaying food stamp benefits for millions.

Air traffic controllers and other federal employees have yet to

receive a paycheck. This did not prevent Trump's Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy from threatening to punish those controllers who could not or would not slave for weeks without pay. Asked by a reporter about "penalizing air traffic controllers that took sick time" during the shutdown, Duffy replied:

My concern is for those air traffic controllers who before they missed a paycheck, we are in the shutdown, they decided on a continual basis not to show up for work. They didn't know how long the shutdown was going to be, they hadn't missed a pay period and they didn't come to work. I'm concerned about those controllers. I'm concerned about their dedication. I'm concerned about their patriotism. But we are going to look at those controllers who continually made the decision not to show up for work.

Throughout the shutdown, neither the Democratic Party nor the trade unions proposed any collective action to end Trump's attacks on the working class. Following the Senate vote, many Democratic Party supporters were furious at yet another capitulation to the fascist in the White House. This is the second time this year Senate Democrats have voted to fund Trump's government without any demand that he resign or even abide by the Constitution and cease deploying troops and militarized immigration police to terrorize immigrants and citizens alike.

In elections last Tuesday, millions voted for Democratic Party candidates because they oppose Trump's drive to establish a dictatorship and his fascistic attacks on immigrants, which portend broader assaults on the entire working class, regardless of citizenship status. In New York, over a million voted to elect a self-described "democratic socialist," Zohran Mamdani, as mayor.

But the Democrats are not an opposition party. They are a party of capitalism and Wall Street, dedicated to defending corporate wealth and private property above all else. Under conditions in which Trump's popularity has collapsed, the

Democrats extended a helping hand to the hated billionaire conman.

Throughout the entire shutdown, Democrats made no demands to curb Trump's police-military dictatorship. There were no calls to end troop deployments or abolish the immigration Gestapo. As 42 million people faced hunger due to delayed food stamps, the Democrats made no demand for emergency funding to abolish hunger in the United States. Feeding America estimated in 2022 that it would cost roughly \$33 billion to ensure food security for all—about 3.3 percent of the Pentagon's \$1 trillion annual budget, and less than 10 percent of the private fortunes of Elon Musk.

Over 24 million people in the United States—around 7 percent of the population—are enrolled in Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplace plans, and more than 90 percent of them receive federal subsidies.

Open enrollment for ACA plans began on November 1. Without the subsidies, virtually every "affordable" plan offered in the marketplace has increased in price. A September 30 analysis from KFF (formerly the Kaiser Family Foundation) found that the expiration of the enhanced premium tax credits would "more than double what subsidized enrollees currently pay annually for premiums—a 114% increase from an average of \$888 in 2025 to \$1,904 in 2026."

In a meaningless gesture, Senate Majority Leader John Thune agreed to bring a vote on the ACA subsidies to the Senate floor in December. There is no guarantee—and it is highly unlikely—that any Republicans will support it. Even if the Senate somehow passed it, House Speaker Mike Johnson told CNN on Monday he was under no obligation to even bring it up for a vote.

"I'm not committing to it," Johnson said. He added, "What I'm saying is that we do a deliberative process. It's the way this always works and we have time to do that and we will in a bipartisan fashion."

While food stamps and workers' paychecks have yet to be delivered, the spending package includes a special cash payout for Republican senators whose phone records were subpoenaed as part of former Special Counsel Jack Smith's investigation into Trump's failed coup. The legislation—passed thanks to Democratic votes—would make it illegal in most cases for the Justice Department to obtain a senator's phone data without public disclosure. Each instance in which records were obtained would now be subject to a \$500,000 fine or settlement.

As part of Smith's investigation, he legally obtained subpoenas for the phone records of eight Republican senators: Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty (Tennessee), Lindsey Graham (South Carolina), Dan Sullivan (Alaska), Tommy Tuberville (Alabama), Ron Johnson (Wisconsin), Cynthia Lummis (Wyoming) and Josh Hawley (Missouri).

Following the vote, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (New York) postured as an opponent of the bill, but reports

indicate he and many in his caucus were prepared to back the same measure weeks earlier. In an interview with Fox News, New Hampshire Senator Jeanne Shaheen—one of the eight Democratic-aligned senators who voted for the package—confirmed that the group had acted with Schumer's knowledge. Asked if they had voted on their own accord, Shaheen replied: "No, we kept leadership informed throughout."

The vast majority of Democrats in Congress have indicated they still support the party leadership. Asked Monday if Senator Chuck Schumer was effective as the leader of the Democrats in the Senate and should keep his job, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (Democrat-New York) replied, "Yes and yes."

He praised the "overwhelming majority of Senate Democrats, led by Chuck Schumer" for waging "a valiant fight over the last seven weeks, defeating the partisan Republican spending bill 14 or 15 different times, week after week after week."

Not a single member of the Democratic Senate caucus has called on Schumer to resign, and fewer than a dozen House Democrats have done so. None of the House Democrats who called for Schumer's resignation has said the same about House Minority Leader Jeffries, who supports Schumer.

Asked by CNN's Jake Tapper on Monday if he still had confidence in Schumer's leadership, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders did not call on him to step down.

"Look, Schumer and I have very fundamental disagreements about where the Democratic Party should be and I am strongly supporting candidates for the Senate who are not part of the Democratic Party establishment," he said.

Sanders added, "If Schumer steps down who is going to take his place? The truth is progressives in the Senate, I think there are about 8 or 9 of us, we're pretty much a minority."

The Democrats' shutdown charade has once again exposed the party as a willing partner in Trump's drive toward dictatorship and its war on the working class. The fight against hunger, inequality and fascism must be organized independently of both capitalist parties and their pseudo-left apologists. Only through the unified, international struggle of the working class can the ruling elite's program of war, austerity and repression be defeated.



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